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NOTE ON DR. PETERS' NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS

ON THE EARLY SUMERIAN RELIGION AND ITS EXPRESSION

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THE TEXTS PUBLISHED in my *Miscellaneous Babylonian Inscriptions* are most of them extremely difficult, especially in their present fragmentary condition. I have read Dr. Peters' comments on them with much interest and am grateful to him for his attempt to elucidate their meaning from the knowledge gained by his experience in Babylonia. His observations in most instances commend themselves. It is a question whether he has not at times over-worked the liturgical idea. While I have that feeling in reading his notes, I am not prepared to say that he has.

The object of the present note is to discuss Dr. Peters' suggestion that text No. 1 is a hymn or liturgy in part in praise of a king of Kesh, who had rebuilt the temple at Nippur. This possibility, though it occurred to me when editing the text, was not seriously entertained, because so little is known historically of Kesh, that such a consideration seemed to land us in an historical mist. The suggestion is, however, worthy of more serious consideration than was then given it. If it should turn out to point to an historical fact, it might open a new vista in Babylonian history.

The ideogram employed in our text for Kesh is Brünnow, No. 10859 (= *CT* 11.49, 32 ab). The question is, does this ideogram designate a city that was later designated by another ideogram, or does it refer to a city never designated by another ideogram? If the latter alternative is true, then Kesh disappeared at the dawn of written history and we know practically nothing about it. If the former is true, then it is possible that something of its later history is known, or at least ascertainable. Clay (*Empire of the Amorites*, p. 104) identifies Kesh with Opis. He does this on the authority of Thureau-Dangin, who in *SAK*, pp. 20, 21, read the ideogram U $\overline{\text{H}}$ U-Kesh. Later in his work, however, (p. 225 note d) Thureau-Dangin recognized U $\overline{\text{H}}$ U as referring to Opis. Clay's identification is accordingly erroneous. Kesh is designated by quite a different ideogram. If Kesh were the same as Opis,

and this foundation cylinder celebrated the repair of the temple of Enlil by a king of Opis, it might record an historical incident in the work of one of those kings of Opis whose names are recorded on the dynastic tablet discovered some years ago by Scheil. In that case the cylinder would be older by one or two hundred years than the date assigned it in my book. There is, however, no satisfactory evidence known to me for the identification of Kesh with Opis.

A stronger argument for the identification of Kesh with Kish could be made. The ideogram for Kesh (*Ki-e-eš*, Brünnow, 10859) is also transliterated Kish (*Ki-i-š*, Brünnow, 10860).¹ The dynasty to which Naram-Sin and Shargalisharri belonged was a dynasty of Kish and Agade, and if Kesh were an archaic designation of Kish, the city might so be referred to in a poetical composition such as our cylinder contains. The identification of Kesh with Kish seems to be accepted by Thureau-Dangin (*SAK* 225 note d), and by Harper, who translated the ideogram by the name Kish (*Code of Hammurabi*, p. 5). In the code, however, the god of Kish is *Za-má-má* (read by Clay, *Za-bà-bà*), while the god of Kesh is *Ma-ma*. As the syllables *má* and *ma* are represented in the two names by different cuneiform signs, and Kesh and Kish are designated by different ideograms, it seems precarious to assume that the two cities were the same.

Kesh was apparently situated somewhere near Kish and Opis (Thureau-Dangin, *loc. cit.*). There is no evidence known to me of a king or dynasty of Kesh that conquered Babylonia. Nevertheless Dr. Peters' idea that the cylinder celebrates the work of a king who rebuilt the temple commends itself as probable. It is not necessary to assume that this monarch was a king of Kesh; if he proceeded to Nippur from Kesh, where he had made some conquest, or repaired some temple, the conditions of our text would be fulfilled.

While, therefore, I am favorably inclined to Dr. Peters' interpretation of the text, I am inclined, while awaiting fuller information as to the locality and identity of Kesh, tentatively to hold as before that in all probability the cylinder is from the time of Naram-Sin.

¹ The city of Kish is usually denoted by a different ideogram (Brünnow, No. 8904 and Meissner, No. 6688). In the one passage known to me in which this ideogram is syllabically defined (Reisner's *Hymnen*, 57. 13, 14) the name is spelled *Ki-ši*, not *Ki-i-š*.